

ASSESSING THE CONDITIONS AND INGREDIENTS OF POLITICAL CLIENTELISM WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

The study examines the conditions, associated with political clientelism, as well as the ingredients of clientelism within the South African context. The study brings the understanding about the relationship between politicians who go out on a periodic basis to canvass for votes and then not much happens in the lives of ordinary people. Despite this, a large number of the same politicians is re-elected to another five-year term. The broad argument in this study is that there seems to be an observable patronage type of relationship between elected parties (politicians) and citizens, and that no matter what service delivery challenges citizens confront (coupled with violent protest in some cases), voting patterns do not change much come election time. The study adopted a conceptual approach, relying on secondary data. Clientelism refers to the relationship that exists between citizens/voters (clients) and politicians (patrons) who make electoral promises in order to gain office. The first section describes what clientelism entails, followed by a discussion of clientelism's relevance to the present study. Then, anecdotal evidence from the research site will be examined to demonstrate some elements of clientelism, as well as its significance and utility in examining service delivery challenges in local government. Following that, essential components of democratic states will be explored because they have an impact on available research evidence, showing clientelistic elements are prevalent in democracies around the world. The chapter's closing will shed some light on how leadership will be approached in this study, which stems from the fact that leadership is a key concept in this research and is implied in clientelism.

Keywords: clientelism, politicians, citizens, government, voters and inequalities.

DOI: 10.21303/2504-5571.2022.002515

1. Introduction

The last few decades brought a wealth of new insights on the nature, mechanics, and drivers of clientelism. The literature made particular strides in understanding vote-buying, which it has come to view often as synonymous with clientelism. The calculations of voters have remained relatively simplified, mostly involving a simple trade-off between material benefits from clientelism and expressive benefits from voting for a programmatic alternative. The key result is that poorer individuals tend to sell their votes because their marginal utility of material benefits, offered for their votes, is higher. Variation in the poor's engagement in clientelism is mostly explained as the result of differences in party targeting. The current emphasis on the supply side of the vote-buying variety of clientelism has left two significant gaps in our understanding. First, the political choices of the poor remain inadequately understood. Although clientelism indeed correlates with poverty [1].

[2] posits that clientelism can also be experienced in both individual and collective settings. Based on research in Brazil, it is argued, that clientelism was increasingly a means, by which to pursue the delivery of collective interests as opposed to individual goods. Political clients are therefore more likely to assume the form of organisations and communities that 'fashion relationships or reach understandings with politicians, public officials and administrations'. Clientelism can display both hierarchical and relational elements as well as elements of collective organisation

and identity. Lastly, levels and scale make a difference to how one assesses clientelism. At the local level an act can be experienced as clientelistic (such as the allocation of a housing unit), but at the macro (provincial or national) level it may be framed as developmental planning or simply democratic politics (for example, changing a housing policy to influence who decides on the allocation of housing units). It is how it is interpreted and enacted at the local level that can result in clientelism. The delivery of programme benefits can be controlled by partisan operatives in specific regions.

[3] avows that clientelism has proven highly adaptable to different political, economic, and cultural environments. This method of contingent exchange thrives in both autocracies and democracies (and in everything in between); it exists in a large variety of cultural contexts; and in the face of economic development it often adapts and endures (contrary to the expectations of earlier analyses). Clientelism also affects things we care about. For some, it is a subverter of democracy and economic development and an indicator of a suboptimal pattern of politics. For others, clientelism undermines the ability of citizens to hold elected officials individually and collectively accountable and induces them to keep the dictatorial and corrupt in power out of fear and narrow self-interest. Clientelism also diverts scarce resources that might otherwise be used to further economic development and generates incentives for keeping constituents poor and dependent. It both reflects and feeds high levels of corruption and ultimately undermines public trust in democratic institutions.

The main aim of the research was to assess conditions and ingredients of political clientelism because it results in the deployment of incapacitated politicians in key political positions and result in poor service delivery because of their inadequate skills. The study also aimed to examine what clientelism entails and to give an exposition of the elements of clientelism. The study sought to reveal, anecdotal evidence through the literature review, which helped to unravel clientelism ambiguity amongst members of the public. The study envisaged to get results, such as governance and accountability, which are congruent with the eradication of unethical behaviour. Following that, essential components of democratic states were explored because they have an impact on available research evidence, showing that clientelistic elements are pervasive in democracies around the world.

2. Materials and Methods

The study used databases, such as Sabinet, Sage Publishers, ResearchGate, JSTOR and Scopus, to search for the literature about clientelism. The study adopted the conceptual approach and relied heavily on secondary data. Secondary data, used in the study, was gathered from relevant books, journals, conference proceedings, published articles. The sources used were those relating to political clientelism. Several journals, focusing on conditions and ingredients, associated with clientelism, were also used.

3. Results

It is important to emphasise right away that, despite substantial research into clientelism, some authors contend that the notion is enigmatic and cannot be articulated in precise or conclusive terms [4]. The concept is so broad and encompasses so many issues that it cannot be put down definitively. The point is to have a narrow enough definition, so that indicators may be developed to measure it across countries. For example, Fox [4] argues that “we are still several steps behind having consistent explanations for what drives its persistence, transformation, or elimination because we still lack precise tools for defining and measuring clientelism.” [5] postulates that clientelism is essentially a variant of ‘special interest politics’, which is a mechanism, by which political parties and their representatives can gain political support in exchange for selectively allocating benefits through state institutions. Clientelism is defined broadly in the classic anthropological definition as a voluntary exchange relationship between social unequals, typically enmeshed in a complex social interaction [6]. Clientelism, according to [7], is the trade of votes for favours in exchange for being elected. Clientelism induces ‘bought’ voters to vote for the candidate who is ‘buying’ them.

Clientelism is defined as an exchange of some kind between two people. In the case of Mexico, [8] observes that politicians buy votes by giving voters items, such as tee-shirts, bags of basic foodstuffs, fruits, vegetables, bags of cement, chickens, cows, and sheep, fertilisers, seeds, washing machines, beer, dictionaries, lighters, and cactuses in exchange for electoral support. Clientelism,

according to [9], is a distinct mode of political exchange. Parties offer to provide non-policy benefits, ranging from a specific private good or service to access to the courts. These benefits are intended for a specific voter or group of voters. Clientelism, it is believed, is characterised by instant gratification for both the party and the people, but results in lower long-term accountability.

[10] accentuates that “clientelism is a political exchange, in which a politician gives patronage in exchange for a client’s vote or support.” In most cases, jobs are exchanged in exchange for votes. In India the Congress Party evolved into “a means of obtaining jobs for friends and relatives, as well as gaining access to many services and material benefits that government at all levels can bestow.” There are various types of clientelism, all of which include a mutually beneficial exchange between a patron and clients. Clientelism, in its most general sense, is what scholars from other regions refer to as constituency service [11].

Clientelism is described as an action-set based on the premise “take there, give here,” which allows clients and patrons to benefit from mutual support, while acting parallel to each other at various levels of political, social, and administrative articulation [12]. Clientelism entails asymmetric but mutually beneficial power and exchange relationships, a non-universalistic *quid pro quo* between individuals or groups of unequal standing. It is also suggested, that clientelism necessitates at least three important factors, which are outlined below:

- Valuable goods are distributed to individuals whose identity is known to politicians or brokers;
- The behaviour of those individuals is monitored (or they believe it may be monitored); and
- Voters who defect from clientelists agreements face some probability of being punished afterwards [13].

Clientelism is related with the particularistic use of public resources and the electoral arena in politics. It comprises exchanging votes and support for jobs and other perks. Through the selective release of public funds to supporting politicians and associates or the acceptance of political nominees as personnel in state related agencies, it can become an useful strategy for winning elections and building political support [12]. Political clientelism is a dyadic relationship, in which a politician provides material goods, services, benefits, or protection to a citizen, who in turn provides general, political, or military support and assistance in exchange for political support [14]. Political clientelism is characterised by a politician acting as a patron, providing goods, services, jobs, resources, and protection to a voter in exchange for political support, which usually includes a vote. Urban and rural citizens relate themselves with local leaders, who act as brokers and link them with regional politicians. They connect the network to national candidates, whose power and influence make them key players in determining the level of public goods.

A similar pattern can be seen in South Africa, particularly if one examines the operation and functionality of the ruling dominant political party, the African National Congress (ANC). During its five-year interval elective congress in Polokwane in 2007, the contest between President Thabo Mbeki and then-Deputy President Jacob Zuma culminated in a fierce contest, which President Zuma won. The resultant effect of that was the recall of President Mbeki. Consequently, a large number of cabinet ministers resigned. Following the 2009 elections, leaders who supported President Mbeki were excluded from serving in President Zuma’s cabinet [15].

Patronage could be seen in a situation where there was overwhelming evidence that the minister of social development had failed in her oversight role to South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) beneficiaries by failing to appoint a new company to begin distributing social grants at the beginning of April 2017. This was not done, and the illegal contract of the current service provider was extended for a period of twelve months by a directive of the Constitutional Court. However, no action was taken against the Minister because she leads an important constituency of the ruling party’s women’s league, which plays an important role in the upcoming election, in which the president has a preferred candidate in the name of Dlamini-Zuma, whereas the current deputy president, according to the ruling party’s past practices, should succeed the president in elections to be held in December 2017 [16].

The concept of clientelism is also consistent with the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, which prioritises people in the development agenda. It uses public participation mechanisms to entrench

“the values of accountability, transparency, efficiency, and consultation.” According to this theory, the relationship between the politician and the public is that of a service provider and a service recipient. The supplier is obligated to provide the recipient with a satisfactory service. In this case, the politician is the supplier, and the public is the recipient. Local government through politicians makes a number of promises to citizens during elections on things that they will deliver once elected into office. Citizens, on the other hand, vote particular parties and politicians on the belief that after elections they will deliver the promises. Clientelism is about political exchange where political leaders give patronage in exchange of political support from clients [17].

3. 1. Conditions Associated With Political Clientelism

There are a number of conditions, associated with clientelism, that are perceived as fertile ground for the prevalence and persistence of clientelism in the socioeconomic fabric of society. These variables include high inequality, culture, and the public sector as the main source of money, governance and accountability, corruption, electioneering, traditional governance structures, and anecdotal evidence, among others. The underlying conditions are explained in depth below.

High inequality

The choice of political clientelism as the conceptual framework, within which this research is articulated, stems from an argument, made by a significant number of authors, that clientelistic politics is most common in conditions of low productivity and high inequality [18], and this has resemblances with the socioeconomic and political system of South Africa. Several authors emphasise that high unequal societies are inevitably characterised by substantial elements of clientelism, and the patron-client network is more evident. Clientelism, it is also believed, will be a natural outcome in poor societies with higher income equality. According to data from several sources, including Statistics South Africa and the Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa is characterised by high population inequality, which is also reflected along racial lines, with many black people being poor and a significant number of white people being rich. South Africa's productivity is also at an all-time low, with the last three years particularly heavily hit [19]. Economic productivity growth was estimated at 3 % in 2014, but was later lowered to less than 2 %. In 2015, the country experienced extremely little growth, with less than 1 %. It was initially set at 2 % in 2016, but was later revised to less than 1 % [19]. Economic growth with dilapidating consequences for the general population was insignificant. It got worse in 2015, when the country was afflicted by the worst drought in decades, which had a significant impact on economic activity production [20]. Thus, when it comes to disparities and low economic growth, South Africa might learn a lot by examining issues, surrounding clientelism, as they are associated with both inequalities and low productivity. It has been demonstrated, that characteristics, such as low productivity and inequality, make clientelism attractive to politicians [10]. As low productivity and inequality are serious factors, facing South African society, it is expected that some elements of clientelism will be at play in the country's political arena. This implies that among the country's politicians, an exchange of goods and services between patrons (politicians) and clients (voters) is inherent, with the latter voting for those who will deliver.

Culture

On the issue of analysing societies in order to eradicate inequalities, it was suggested, that more attention be paid to culture and social relations. This will help to understand the balance of power among social groups, the depth of dependency relations, and the extent, to which poor people rely on elites for land, credit, and other resources [21]. The argument, being made here, is that poor people suffer greatly and, for the most part, rely on those with power and material resources to lift them out of poverty. It is also suggested, that through a clientelism-based analytical framework, researchers must understand the country's cultural and socio-political context, including underlying social relations and traditions, basic characteristics of the state and economy, and the number of choices available to citizens [21]. Clientelism is, in fact, a system, utilised to ensure that there is sufficient electoral mobilisation and support for political benefits and power consolidation.

Inequalities, according to [22], translate into greater implicit welfare weights, allocated to wealthy and powerful classes in policy formulation and implementation. This is also known as elite

capture, in which the socioeconomic conditions of the people are used to legitimise the problem through clientelism. Clientelism informs the provision of public services to socioeconomic strata, particularly to the weaker sections of society for power consolidation. It should be highlighted, that this is discretionary rather than programmatic, and it frequently results in vertical and horizontal inequities. It is also used to reduce the possibility of political competition.

National culture is critical to this process, and its essence is most likely derived from the cultural dimension to conduct meta-analysis that determines how leaders are shaped and influenced for good theoretical framework and consumption of theories that promote clientelism [23]. It clearly accounts for the power of structures, to which leaders are tied or belong. Importantly, the extent of inherent interaction between and between the leader and the people determines the high-level cognitive processes of leadership. Given the primary linkages between culture and people, their active participation is of paramount importance, and as such, its influence on leadership cannot be overstated. Hence, the significance of leadership is determined by social space and efforts.

3. 2. Public Sector as the main source of money and help to most individuals

Clientelism literature also asserts that if the public sector is a major source of money and support for most people, clientelism thrives [24]. The preceding sentence implies that a country should not rely on the public sector as the main source of money (revenue) and support for the majority of its population in order to achieve high productivity and improved living conditions for all citizens. But the essential point to remember here is that clientelism is associated with societies that depend on the public sector as their primary source of livelihood. And patronage is used to induce people to sell their votes.

It is also argued, that the problem with clientelism and the large public sector is not only an issue, but that such a large sector is often bloated, with many employees not employed according to their expertise, skills, and qualifications [12]. A typical trait of poor democracies is the combination of large public sectors with a low distributive component. Taxes are utilised not for redistribution, but to employ people in a bloated public service, increasing the likelihood of poor performance. The scale of the public sector is a major issue since it is regarded as a proxy for clientelism, which indicates that more public employment equals greater patronage [12]. In South Africa, particularly in rural areas, most people depend on the public sector for goods and services [25], and the issue of social grants for child support and elderly care is enormous. Thus, examining this in rural local settings would help to shed light on this part of the public sector, in which clientelism thrives, as well as what is being done to develop other sources of income and livelihood than dependency on the state.

3. 3. Governance and accountability

According to the literature on clientelism, clientelistic countries have poor governance outcomes across the board, including lower levels of government effectiveness and a weaker rule of law [26]. Democratic societies espouse human rights, the rule of law, and transparent governance; yet, it has been observed that governance institutions are sometimes weak and ineffective, something that resonates well with clientelism and should not be the case in democracies across the globe. Some authors strongly argue that clientelism leads to “lower long-term accountability”, since politicians celebrate after receiving votes, while selected voters receive rewards for voting for the politician or party in question.

Furthermore, some scholars argue that clientelism “neutralises the system of representation and entitlements by placing associates and friends in strategic positions of public power and control” [12]. Clientelism, from this vantage point, is inimical to the institutionalisation of public accountability and the mechanisms of administrative control. When friends and associates are given positions of public power and control, they will do little to hold the politician accountable. Clientelism leads to overemployment and underqualification in public administration, as well as skewed bidding for public works projects and overpricing. Secluded negotiations and private deals, utilising public resources, are frequently mentioned by researchers [12]. Accountability is a critical issue in South Africa, where it has been demonstrated, that it is frequently imposed on public

servants and politicians by the justice system when citizens lodge complaints with the courts. One glaring example is the expenditure on the president's residential place, which was upgraded with approximately R245 000 000 at the taxpayer's expense, and it was discovered through the courts that pricing was exaggerated in some cases, and some of the features upgraded were non-security as required by law [27]. The point, being made here, is that public representatives can sometimes act with impunity, since they know their political parties, particularly the dominant ruling party, will not hold them accountable. Only through the justice system and the Public Protector's Office has accountability been imposed on authorities.

3. 4. Corruption

According to several authors, clientelism is often associated with corruption, and corrupt activities involve using the power inherent in a government office to advance personal interests [9]. Bribery and extortion, nepotism and favouritism, and embezzlement are all cases of abuse [28]. From the perspective of government officials, corruption involves exploiting the workplace as a venture, from which to extract income. Corrupt officials may accept bribes in exchange for lawful granting of licences, state bank loans, or government contracts. Clientelistic attitudes and behaviours are prone to corruption [17]. Personal or institutional incentives that serve private interests, with the goal of remaining in power for as long as possible [17]. Public managers and politicians conduct political and common crimes in order to serve the interests of individuals, parties, and networks, in violation of the principles of legality, rationality, impersonality, and general interest [17]. The irresponsible behaviour of individuals engaged is based on the use of private information, collusion with businessmen, influence peddling, arbitrary use of bureaucratic power, and so on. The conditions of the political system and party system, such as the arrival of a new party to power, the lengthy tenure of one party in power, and the lack of a critical public opinion, all contribute to root these ballasts for democracy.

The existing literature on corruption demonstrates that it is increasing at an alarming rate and, worse, involves large sums of money that should benefit many communities across the country, particularly those that are poor and depend on government services for a livelihood [27]. On abuse of state power and resources, which are part of corruption, Madonsela [27] is worth quoting at length:

One of the critical elements of our Constitutional vision is to make a decisive break from unchecked abuse of state power and resources that was virtually institutionalised during the apartheid era. To achieve this goal, we adopted accountability, the rule of law and the supremacy of the Constitution as values of our constitutional democracy.

It was observed, that South African Airways (SAA) awarded the New Age newspaper a contract for circulation to all of its customers aboard its planes ([27], 2016). The problem is that the New Age was still in its embryonic state, with less than six months of circulation when it was handed a huge contract with SAA. The Gupta family owned the New Age, which had a close relation with former President Zuma, and worse, the former President's son is a co-owner of some of the Gupta-owned companies. It is obvious, that the tendering processes were not followed when some of the projects were awarded [27]. A South African armed manufacture Denel entered into an agreement with Gupta-owned VR-laser to procure armament components. Tegeta Resources, a Gupta-owned company, also obtained a contract to supply coal to Eskom through suspicious procurement procedures and principles [27].

Clientelism is linked to unlawful political fundraising by political parties. The ruling party's treasurer acknowledged receiving the funds but stated that if they are illicit, they will repay the amount donated [29].

According to the Corruption Act No. 94 of 1992, any gratification, aimed at influencing someone to take a particular decision or be influenced to take, constitutes illegal means, dishonesty, abuse, and manipulation of systems. As a result, there is a need to fight and confront corruption, so that it does not devour or destroy society's moral fibre. [30], like the applicable legislation, defines corruption as any undue gratification, gained through violations of the prescribed procurement processes. As a result, the conduct of public officials must be continuously and rigorously

monitored to ensure that scarce resources are not wasted. There is sufficient proof that political corruption existed under apartheid and Homelands governments. And the circumstances for it to thrive were created by secrecy, oppression, and authoritarianism. It is undeniable, that high-profile allegations of corruption existed during the democratic dispensation.

According to a report, “corruption within the ANC is so pervasive that it can no longer be regarded as a perception” [16]. It was also said, that there are some in the ANC who loot the state, and that looting destroys the state’s ability to deliver services. Millions of rands in development funds were allegedly allocated under the auspices of the Evaton Renewal Project under the administrations of former Gauteng Premiers. According to [31], public officials are sometimes appointed to oversee aspects of national life based on their political capital rather than their professional output in the provision of services. This essentially means that clientelism generates conditions conducive to corruption, since it has the capacity to build a complicity pact among the responsible actors or agents in the execution of their mandates, and predatory political behaviour becomes apparent and pursues corrupt tendencies.

3. 5. Electioneering

Clientelism research also suggests that in some cases, politicians may accelerate or delay development in their area prior to elections if they believe that doing so will benefit them during elections [28]. Political leaders purposefully manipulate development and infrastructure projects to pursue purely partisan lines, ultimately benefiting from votes. [24], for example, tells the case of a Filipino congressional representative who attempted to halt the construction of a new road until after the election, so that “his” squatters will not be moved out of the district. The issue is about publicly funded projects that legislators promote in order to bring money and jobs to their own districts as a political favour to local politicians and citizens.

3. 6. Traditional Governance Structures

According to a significant number of scholars, clientelism bears some resemblance to traditional governance structures [28]. This implies that clientelism will be difficult to find in a genuinely democratic society. Traditional governance structures are not democratic by nature, because authority is based on heredity rather than expertise and qualifications. In most cases, when making decisions about development programmes, they require some type of gratification, implying that clientelism and corruption are the norm and have become an inherent feature of their administration. According to Municipal Structures Amendment Act No. 33 of 2000, elected local councillors lead democratic local governance, and so meaningful interrelations and coexistence with traditional structures are vital.

Members of the community expect ward councillors to drive development and ensure the provision of services now that they have been elected. As a result, amicable and cooperative relations with traditional structures are critical for long-term local governance and leadership provision. Clearly, the interaction between elected representatives, traditional leadership institutions, and voting citizens should improve the population’s living conditions and lead to development. It has also been found, that ruling party legislators utilise their administrative power to deliver rural development funds and projects in exchange for election support from local village council leaders, which is often open for abuse and could lead to corruption [32].

According to [28], clientelism, also known as the patron-client model, has permeated the political system, and as a result, complex matters of government must solve problems, faced by the people. Unfortunately, the mechanism to organise and orient parties toward policy responses is based on personalities rather than agreed-upon programmes.

3. 7. Anecdotal evidence

During the 2016 municipal elections in the Limpopo Province in general, there were significant signs of clientelism. Since the advent of democracy, ruling party representatives have won elections despite a slide decline in the number of voters. However, in Ward 6, a by-election was held after the representative of the ruling party passed on, and surprisingly, a representative of the

new opposition party Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) won the by-election and became the new ward councillor [33].

Anecdotal evidence reveals that the opposition party (EFF) worked tirelessly to fix dysfunctional mono pumps that had been neglected for years, and that the pumps began working soon before the by-election. According to the data, gathered from the study area, the opposition party's actions served as a means of buying votes and convincing voters that the opposition party can deliver [33].

3. 8. Democracy And Some Ingredients of Clientelism

There is a strong case to be made that purely democratic societies adhere to transparent and legal procedures, in which citizens, including disadvantaged groups, have the right to receive government services, hold and express political opinions, and organise themselves to advocate for their own interests [34]. However, this is not always the case, as citizens in some countries do not receive government services for extended periods, and in the few circumstances where they do, the services are inadequate. Some African countries are also known to exercise large-scale patronage in government appointment [35], which is contrary to the key principles of democratic rule and good governance. Thus, democratic societies, such as South Africa, should be extensively examined in order to determine whether and to what extent clientelistic tendencies of the patron-client relationship exist.

According to clientelism literature, higher-income countries have democratic institutions in their decision-making systems, but they have not completely abandoned clientelism [10]. This indicates that well-developed democratic countries are prone to clientelistic tendencies, which is somewhat paradoxical, given that democratic countries are, by definition, anti-clientelistic. Within a democratic system of government, where the rule of law, periodic fair elections and majority rule are core values [4]. Furthermore, policy decisions are made in the open after public discussion and review. More importantly, decision-making standards and procedures are explicit. Moreover, authority is institutional and resides with official roles. This, however, differs considerably from undemocratic states, in which decision-making standards are not explicit and procedures are hidden from the public. The rule of law is very questionable in undemocratic states. The point remains, however, that clientelism is inevitable in democratic states, regardless of wealth level. Clientelism is expected to be widespread in low-income democratic states.

It is also true, that expecting democracy to make people more virtuous and political actors more altruistic in Africa or elsewhere is both absurd and naïve [32]. A significant number of political leaders are not altruistic at all, and worse, cling to power for reasons other than the interest of the majority of citizens. Leaders in a democratic state maintain power by giving collective benefits that garner the support of large segments of society [8]. There is a plethora of examples of African leaders who are preoccupied with their positions and clinging to power by whatever means necessary, including changing constitutions instead of serving the will of the people and vacating their positions after their terms expire [16]. The Gambia is a case in point, as the present President's term of office expired and elections were held, which he lost but still claimed to be the president. This brings into the picture the idea of electoral corruption.

The term "electoral corruption" refers to unfair means of obtaining or retaining government positions, such as voter intimidation and ballot stuffing [8]. The prime motive for attempting to manipulate elections is to preserve opportunities for incumbents and their allies to enrich themselves at the expense of the public, which is prevalent in a number of countries throughout the world, including Zimbabwe. The same may be said of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where conflict has claimed around 5.4 million lives since August 1998 owing to political intolerances, making it the deadliest occurrence since World War II. According to the Congo Electoral Commission report of February 2015, the country's electoral process is currently at an impasse due to President Kabila's refusal to leave office despite the expiration of his term. Closer to home, the situation in Zimbabwe has been tumultuous for years, with contested elections and church leaders with opposing viewpoints exiled.

Essentially, leaders in African democratic countries are more concerned with retaining power than with the well-being of all citizens. As a result, the purpose of this study is to shed light on those elected to positions of power and whether they truly care about the plight of all people in the country, particularly disadvantaged rural communities. According to [36], the situation in Mali is the result of the taste that political leaders have developed, as well as the need for resources, which leads them to diverge and become irrational. Overall, this is the realistic situation that many countries face, where instability is rampant in the life of the nation, given the impact of resources on nation-state socio-political systems.

3. 9. Democracy and Poverty Exacerbate Inequalities

One of the tenets of democratic states is that the majority of the population should benefit and have their quality of life improved. In short, there should be coordinated efforts to eradicate poverty. However, other democratic states, such as South Africa, are characterised by high levels of poverty and inequality, giving the impression that some form of clientelism prevails. The premise is that democracy should help in the fight against poverty, but it is evident, that in a democratic state like South Africa, poverty is so widespread, particularly in rural communities, that one would conclude that the country practises too much clientelism. While clientelism may benefit some of the poor, it is said to breed inequity, since it excludes people who do not have assets, with which to bargain [8].

It is contended, that the poor have fared less well in Latin America or Africa, where the income disparity is often considerably worse [28]. Political clientelism may not always result in large-scale redistribution of resources to benefit all people. Patron-client networks play an ambivalent role in the struggle against poverty, as clientelism can benefit some impoverished people, while also breeding inequity. More prosperous people who lack patrons due to ethnicity or partisan may also be denied access to work, land, and other production elements. People in a patron-client network use state authority and resources to improve their incomes and livelihoods, yet even network participants may be held back because the exchange relationship is uneven or exploitative [8].

3. 10. Democracy and Ethnicity

It has been observed, that democratic rule may amplify identity politics and patronage [34]. Under competitive conditions, political leaders require a criterion for distinguishing and rewarding followers, while excluding non-supporters. Because ethnicity serves this purpose so well, the patron has an incentive to form a winning coalition by directing resources toward those who clearly share the same background or heritage. An ethnic group is made up of people who believe they have a common ancestry because they have comparable physical features, historical experiences, languages, religions, or other customs. Low-income voters, for their part, may mobilise into ethnic blocs in order to maximise their prospects of receiving specific benefits from the state, given the political dynamics that shape political developments. Political violence was fought around Malamulele, for example, on municipal demarcations, over Vendas and Tsongas ethnic considerations. The violence was so intense that the national government was forced to intervene after substantial property damage and, to a lesser extent, loss of life. Where ascriptive affinity, such as ethnicity, characterises the political system and economic landscape, democracy is often compromised [37].

[38] avers that managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa demonstrates how negotiation and mediation can promote conflict resolution and a political environment that fosters economic development. It offers a compelling case for the use of both political incentives (power sharing, elections, and fiscal programs) and a variety of actions (including principles of inclusiveness, coercion, and punishment) to support reconciliation. This “carrot and stick” approach can be employed by a state to promote increased political bargaining, while maintaining stability, and by outside intermediaries to cope with conflict, brought on by the breakdown of domestic regimes

The limitations of the study were that the study is conceptual, and lack of interaction with the politicians and the constituency made it difficult for the researchers to get current trends and

information, pertaining to clientelism. It was very difficult to get current sources about clientelism. The phenomenon of clientelism needs to be further researched in future because its unethical nature is normally concealed by politicians and the ruling parties globally. It is evident, that clientelism is a global concern that needs to be further explored by current and future Researchers.

4. Conclusion

The study assessed clientelism, detailing its key elements and how it pertains to the study. Despite the hardships that ordinary citizens endure on a daily basis, the relation between politicians and citizens has developed elements of patronage. South African governance structures bear some resemblance to clientelist conditions, such as a highly unequal society, a large public sector that appears bloated at times and with unskilled personnel in higher positions, widespread corruption, and developed traditional governance structures, to name a few. It is thus considered appropriate, that further light be thrown on the operation and functionality municipalities in respect to the delivery of services, or lack thereof, to the poor communities, the conceptual framework of clientelism. Furthermore, adopting clientelism will help to unpack the seeming erosion of democratic governance, whether covertly or overtly. This is especially true in relation to the lack of value of the secret ballot since, as with clientelism, politicians know who voted for them and who did not because they are acquainted with their constituency. The choice of clientelism is also influenced in part by the fact that its definition is not innocent. Political monopoly dampens (but does not eliminate) electoral competition and provides incumbents with an incentive to stifle both redistributive policies and economic development. Instead of political monopoly, we should have political heterogeneity, which means a lack of dominance by a single political party. Zimbabwe's situation is exemplified by the fact that the ruling ZANU-PF has been in power since 1980. This study went into greater detail about clientelism, comparing earlier developments, associated with feudalism, and dictatorship to modern democracies. It was highlighted, that there are concerns about the precise definition of clientelism, with some authors contending that such a definition is, to put it mildly, elusive. However, the discussion revealed that there is general agreement on the nature of clientelism, which is an exchange or transaction of some kind between the politician and the voter. The discussion then expanded on to a variety of other attributes. This was followed by an exposition of apparent lessons and development in the context of South Africa.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Financing

The publication of this study is financed by the Research Output Fund in the Department of Public Administration Financing from the University of Limpopo in South Africa

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge all the authors of the sources, cited in the study

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Received date 23.05.2022

Accepted date 11.07.2022

Published date 29.07.2022

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How to cite: Masemola N. D., Selepe M. M. (2022). *Assessing the conditions and ingredients of political clientelism within the South African context. EUREKA: Social and Humanities*, 4, 91–102. doi: <http://doi.org/10.21303/2504-5571.2022.002515>